

Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

Dr. Vicki S. McConnell, State Geologist

Evidence of the last great subduction zone earthquake can be seen at Youngs Bay near Astoria.

NEWS RELEASE: May 13, 2011

Contact: James Roddey (971) 673-1543 or (503) 807-8343

Tsunami Evacuation Drills at the Oregon coast beginning next week!

Portland, Oregon: As part of the ongoing Tsunami Outreach Oregon education and awareness program administered by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) and Oregon Emergency Management (OEM), several coastal communities will be holding tsunami evacuation drills in the next 2 weeks.

The coastal communities of Pacific City and Neskowin and surrounding communities will be holding a voluntary Tsunami Evacuation Drill Tuesday, May 17, beginning at 10 AM. For more information on this drill, please contact Fire Captain Jim Kusz at (541) 407-0801.

Gold Beach, Port Orford and surrounding communities will be holding voluntary Tsunami Evacuation Drills Thursday, May 19, beginning at 10 AM. For more information on these drills contact South Coast Tsunami Outreach Coordinator Dave Lacey at (541) 373-0487 or Don Kendall, Curry County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Services Coordinator at (541) 247-3208.

On May 25 at 10 AM, the City Of Warrenton, nearby unincorporated areas, and Warrenton area schools will hold their voluntary Tsunami Evacuation Drill. For more information on this drill contact North Coast Tsunami Outreach Coordinator Patrick Wingard at (503) 717-3995.

The community wide drills in Pacific City, Gold Beach and Port Orford will also incorporate an airborne public address system developed by Guardians From Above and the Power Sonix Corporation. This same type of airborne public address system has been used in search and rescue efforts by the Civil Air Patrol throughout the region and has been demonstrated in tsunami drills as an additional method of alerting coastal residents of a distant tsunami warning issued by the National Weather Service where sirens have limited coverage.

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The drills will be an opportunity for residents, visitors and businesses to participate in a mock tsunami evacuation. This event will familiarize residents and visitors with the local tsunami warning system and provide them with an organized event so they can practice walking local tsunami evacuation routes.

In communities with tsunami warning siren systems, the voluntary Tsunami Evacuation Drill will begin when the tsunami warning sirens and fire department sirens are activated at 10 AM.

Each participant will then walk their evacuation route and note their departure time. Volunteers will be positioned around town to help guide people along the routes and ensure safe crossings of busy streets and Highway 101. For the main evacuation routes, greeters will be located at assembly areas to record participant's arrival times.

In Pacific City, Neskowin, Port Orford and Gold Beach, coastal residents will also hear tsunami drill announcements broadcast over the airborne public address system as a specially equipped aircraft flies along the coast of these communities with a special message announcing the drills.

“Over the last year, from Chile, to New Zealand, to Japan, we’ve seen how dangerous earthquakes and tsunamis can be when you are not prepared,” said Vicki McConnell, State Geologist. “DOGAMI, Oregon Emergency Management, other State Agencies and thousands of individuals throughout Oregon are working on a number of initiatives that will help save lives in the event of an earthquake or tsunami, including enhanced and updated tsunami hazard mapping at the coast, seismic retrofit grants for schools, fire stations and police stations, as well as Tsunami Outreach Oregon, a multi-year outreach and education program in partnership with coastal communities on earthquake and tsunami preparedness.”

The Tsunami Evacuation Drills are a collaborative effort with many partners, led by local fire and police departments, city and county emergency management staff, Community Emergency Response Teams and the many volunteers that have helped make the Tsunami Outreach Oregon program successful in these many communities.

The evacuation drills are supported by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Emergency Management, the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, and the National Weather Service, with funding from the NOAA National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program.

The voluntary tsunami evacuation drills are part of the Tsunami Outreach Oregon program that began in March, 2010 with a goal of enhancing earthquake and tsunami readiness efforts in as many coastal Oregon communities as possible over a 4 year period, while building sustainable, ongoing grass roots volunteer efforts revolving around disaster preparedness. The program has reached dozens of communities and school districts and will continue through 2013.

For more information on this program, please contact Tsunami Out-

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For more information on this program, please contact Tsunami Outreach Oregon Program Manager James Roddey, at (971) 673-1543, or (503) 807-8343 (cell).

You can find more information on the Tsunami Outreach Oregon education program, the effort to remap the entire 362 mile of the Oregon coast for both distant and local tsunami inundation, an online, interactive tsunami inundation map, evacuation brochures for 40+ coastal towns and much more at <http://www.OregonTsunami.org>

The mission of the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries is to provide earth science information and regulation to make Oregon safe and prosperous.

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